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Iceland volcano update

1750 BST on Monday, 17 May 2010

Latest information received from the Icelandic Meteorological Office indicates that the explosive activity from the Eyjafjallajökull volcano is continuing, with the ash plume reaching heights of up to 26,000 ft. The ash cloud is not expected to continue to affect the UK as south-westerly winds have become established, driving the ash away from UK airspace.

The Met Office is the north-west European Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre (VAAC) with responsibility for issuing the Volcanic Ash Advisories for this area in line with internationally agreed standards and processes as designated by the aviation regulator and industry.

The VAAC advice is a combination of model simulations, observations and expert scientists and weather forecasters. On Sunday, research aircraft observations showed a thick and extensive layer of ash across the north of the UK. Met Office observations made on Monday over the south-east of the UK have shown ash is present, but in sufficiently low concentrations to allow airspace to re-open in these areas.

The Met Office provides forecasts to the standards and tolerances set by the Regulator. Our model can be configured to provide forecasts to any tolerance of ash that is deemed safe by the aviation regulatory authorities.

Operational decisions on airspace restrictions are the responsibility of CAA and further information on the impacts of the volcanic ash should be sought from them. However, no decision on airspace restrictions will be made more than 24 hours in advance.

Met Office Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre

Five-day ash prediction charts

Iceland Volcano latest observations

Related links:

CAA — UK Civil Aviation Authority

NATS — National Air Traffic Services

Icelandic Met Office: Update on activity

Notes to editors:

- The Met Office is the UK's National Weather Service, providing 24x7 world-renowned scientific excellence in weather, climate and environmental forecasts and severe weather warnings for the protection of life and property.
- As one of only two World Area Forecast Centres, the Met Office regularly advises the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and National Air Traffic Services.
- Met Office forecasters monitor volcanic eruptions as part of the Met Office's role in the global network of nine Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAAC).
- Volcanic ash can be dangerous for aircraft, causing damage, reducing visibility, and potentially clogging engines.
- The Met Office's Environment Monitoring and Response Centre is constantly monitoring the Iceland area. Our first advisory was issued at 1400 on 14 April and they have subsequently been updated every six hours.

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